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ABSTRACT

The special problems for adult education presented by population planning programs are examined with particular attention to the relationship between adult education and school education in this field, with special reference to programs in Turkey. (DB)

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ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY PLANNING

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Many countries in all parts of the world have been instituting national programs in family or population planning in the past few years. Turkey established such a program four years ago and significant progress has been made in the intervening period of time. Family or population planning is an activity of adults and adult education is a major component of any population planning program. In this paper, the special problems for adult education presented by population planning programs are examined with particular attention to the relationship between adult education and school education in this field.

PROBLEMS COMMON TO MANY ADULT EDUCATORS

Before considering the unique adult education problems involved, attention may well be given to the ways in which problems involved in population planning education are similar to those in other areas of concern to adult education. In the first place, population planning is national policy in Turkey and in many other countries, and in this aspect is similar to policies involving increase in agricultural production, improvement of water supply, transportation, technical skills, and health of the people. Matters of public policy such as those listed above are promoted through the provision of technical personnel and services, and development of understanding on the part of the people affected. Adult education plays a part not only in helping individuals to come to understand the problem and in developing skills to deal with their problems but also in facilitating the most effective partnership between the technical personnel and resources provided by the Government and the people concerned with the problem. This is also true for population planning. The government provides clinical services including contraceptives and through various means of adult education the people are helped to understand the population problem for themselves and for the nation and are educated about

the various means by which they can plan for the limitation in the population.

Similarly, problems of social development of the type which are listed above are usually assigned to one agency of the government but other agencies contribute in various ways to the problems. For example, the problems of agricultural development may be primarily the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture but many other governmental agencies are involved. In population planning this is also true. Although the Ministry of Health has the primary responsibility, inter-ministry cooperation is necessary and such collaboration is specifically provided for in Turkey and in most other countries. One such ministry which is usually involved is that of the Ministry of Education. Up to this point this has largely meant that the adult education section of the Ministry of Education has been called upon to assist in the attainment of the objectives of population planning. In some instances, efforts are under way to extend the scope of action in Ministries of Education to include the formal education system. This will be discussed more fully later.

In a related manner, the approach to social development at the local level has frequently been carried out through general community development schemes. Specific projects may be the particular responsibility of or of special concern to particular agencies of the government but activities at the local level are geared into general community development programs. Adult education activities are an integral part of such community development programs and where population planning is an established national program and where community development is an important approach to social development, adult education in population planning will likely be one part of the total adult education program. For example, in Iran, the Literacy Corps staff members receive instruction in population planning as a part of their training and include this area in their adult education work.

Another illustration of the similarity in adult education activities in the area of population planning with other social development programs may be seen in

the use of the mass media. Mass media are employed to create awareness and to encourage audiences to take additional steps which may lead them to adopt a new pattern of behavior. Mass media have proven to be useful in this way for a variety of efforts at social development. The level of content in such efforts may vary depending on the project. In many areas of concern it is clear that the mass media is a beginning step and that the final steps have to be taken in a face-to-face setting.

In the field of population planning mass media are being used extensively, and the experience of specialists in mass media developed in other programs has been brought to bear in the preparation of materials and in the devising of appropriate means of dissemination in the new field.

A final illustration is the fact that adult education and the formal education system frequently engage in collaborative work on problems of social concern. For example, agricultural development projects may be jointly promoted in the school gardens as well as on the land of progressive farmers. Community health education projects may be reinforced by appropriate school activities.

The manner in which these school activities complement the adult education programs depends in part on the nature of the programs:

1. In some instances such as in health and in certain agricultural practices, the school program may encourage reluctant parents to participate in such programs.

2. Certain skills such as home science may be developed in school programs which may not be fully utilized now but will be useful when the students have their own homes.

3. Basic orientations to change in certain areas of personal and social life may be developed which will make the current generation of youth more amenable to new behavior patterns as adults.

The special opportunities and problems of complementary relationships of adult and school education will be discussed more fully below.

SPECIAL ADULT EDUCATION PROBLEMS

In the first place, changes in reproductive behavior involves in some measure change in behavior on the part of two particular people. The degree to which both the husband and the wife need to be invloved on a continuing basis is in part related to the means which are used in their population planning. For the rhythm method to be most effective, both partners must have a high degree of understanding of the relationship between the menstrual cycle and conception. A wife may accept an IUD without her husband's knowledge but she is not likely to take this step without his consent. The use of conventional contraceptives is almost certain to require the acceptance of both partners.

At a more fundamental level, the matter of spacing, of decision to have no more children, and similar decisions involves some degree of congruence of the points of view of the marriage partners. The particular means to be adopted is presumably a problem which is faced after having accepted the point of view that births should be spaced and/or limited in number. It is of course possible for a dominant partner to impose his decision on the other and in cultures where the husband's authority over his wife is not challenged his wife may comply with her husband's wishes even though she may not share his point of view. And a wife who feels strongly about not having children may find ways to achieve this goal despite her husband's lack of concern. It is clear however that the most effective approach to population planning should include joint acceptance of this family goal.

Given this feature of the problem, the adult education specialist is faced with a different kind of problem than he has faced in many other areas of work. Although adult education may be carried out as a group activity, the change in behavior which is usually sought is that of an individual. And typically, the individuals are of a similar status group in the community. Men tend to be reached

much more extensively and when females are served in adult education activities in the villages this would tend to be in relationship to types of behavior which are generally viewed as those in which females are engaged. There is limited experience in approaching marriage partners as the unit for the adult education activity.

For population planning adult education activities usually occur in sexually segregated groups even though the content of such activities may be quite similar. Home visitors may be able to meet with both the husband and the wife but this is not the typical pattern. This becomes a particularly important problem since studies have shown that husbands and wives in the developing societies do not have a tradition of talking together about sexual matters. And so there is no assurance that such discussions will occur even though both partners have each been to meetings or have in other ways been encouraged to engage in population planning.

A second major problem is the difficulty which adult educators have in dealing with an area of experience which has been traditionally considered a highly personal matter. It should be pointed out that this is not a problem which is restricted to developing countries. Educators have traditionally dealt with content in which the affective content is limited and in which they feel no embarrassment in dealing with the content.

In order to deal with the reticence, education specialists in the population planning field in some countries receive special training which helps them overcome this problem. Such special training is not normally a part of the preparation of the general adult educator and he is frequently reluctant to engage in work in this field.

A third problem is the relationship between content of adult education programs and the nature of the change in behavior which is expected of those who are reached. In many of the programs which adult educators develop, the types of

skills and competences which are goals of the programs can be specified quite clearly and the means for developing those skills and competences can also be noted and special assistance given when needed.

In the field of population planning, a different set of problems is faced by the adult educator. He may assume as a minimum goal that the adults ought to have a basic understanding of the process of human reproduction. Or he may assume that they should be thoroughly familiar with the various means of contraceptives in order to make prudent choices. He may assume also that they ought to appreciate the significance of family size for the quality of life of the family and of the relevance of population dynamics for the social and economic development of ones country. If such educational goals are seen as necessary for the successful development of population planning, the adult educator has a framework within which to build his curriculum and to devise his teaching and learning strategies.

However, there is at present no body of evidence which would lead the adult educator to feel certain of any of the assumptions given above. It seems evident that many women are prepared to respond to the authority of the doctor in this field as in many others; e.g. having decided that spacing or limitation of family size is good, they may not see any need for any higher level of understanding than they require concerning injections for small-pox. Or they may feel that they do not need to know anything more than they know when the doctor gives them a prescription which involves their taking medication in a certain fashion.

There is a similar educational problem concerning population dynamics. Population planning may well have been adopted as a matter of public policy both as a health measure to deal with the high rates of abortion or infant or maternal mortality, and as a means to facilitate the more rapid social and economic development. Does it necessarily follow that the content of adult education programs should focus on these factors? Is there any reason to believe that a particular family will decide to limit the number of children which they have in response

to an appeal based on national welfare and advancement?

With these questions in mind, what is the role of the adult educators? If the problem is essentially one of changing the norms of society so that married couples will want only a small family and if holding these norms does not necessarily involve a high level of sophistication concerning human reproduction or national population problems, is the involvement of the adult educator necessary or desirable?

The adult education task is important for a number of reasons. In the first place, adult educators are committed to the concept of a rational basis for changing attitudes and behavior. The problem of the relationship between knowledge and human conduct is a persistent one for all educators and particularly for adult educators. When a change in agricultural methods is being sought, it is clear that changes in attitudes are involved as well as the development of new skills. The bias of the educator is in favor of a knowledge base for the new attitudes. His credibility as an educator is at stake if he finds himself associated with a program in which a relevant level of understanding and competence is not involved. He does not want to be a propagandist.

Secondly, a time perspective is needed. The nature of population dynamics is such that effects of even a major change in the birth rate will not be felt for a long period of time. The individual family may not always be able to assess for itself the consequences of having limited its size. Therefore, the perspective which education can provide may be of great value when population planning programs run into difficulties.

The third reason is that all of the current means of contraceptives available frequently present very many problems both for the individual users and for those who are administering national programs. The two most widely used contraceptives in mass programs are the pill and the IUD, and both of these have been developed and employed for only a few years. New means of contraceptives are continually being developed. The acceptance and diffusion of new contraceptives

will be greatly facilitated if a basic educational approach has been built into the current programs which are based on available contraceptives.

ADULT EDUCATION AND SCHOOL EDUCATION

At a number of places in the analysis of the role of the adult educator presented above, reference has been made to the relationship between adult education and education in the formal education system. It is important to give more direct attention to this problem since a number of countries are beginning to give increased attention to population education in the formal education system and as this develops the adult educator will find himself facing a somewhat different set of problems. In order to understand this development, it is necessary to consider the various ways in which the formal education system is now approaching the field of population planning in various countries.

Attention to population education in the school systems has been developing for several reasons. In the first place, the solution to reduction in the rate of growth of the population in a country is a long term process and cannot be solved by a massive campaign among the current generation of adults as has been approximated in some public health programs such as malaria control or eradication of yaws. Conception is not a disease to be eradicated. Each generation faces anew the problem of age of marriage, spacing of children, and size of families. Educational efforts which successfully reach the young people in the pre-married state will facilitate the work of the adult educator working with the young or older married couples. If small family norms can be developed among the young, the chances are substantially improved that the adult education tasks will be simpler and more easily attained.

In addition, many population planning programs employ in various ways mass media in order to reach adults. Such mass media are by definition limited in the degree to which they can be selective in those who will be reached by such activities. Young people are being exposed to communications concerning popula-

tion planning through the mass media efforts of such national programs and are increasingly faced with new points of view in the press, cinemas, and other general media. Given this as a fact of life, the educators in the formal school system can no longer ignore or by-pass this area. To do so is to leave important education in this area to chance, or to less desirable and controlled means. In India, Tunis, Korea, Iran, and other countries, the Ministries of Education are building programs in their school systems. These programs vary somewhat in their emphasis and will be modified as they gain more experience. In countries which do not have strong central ministries of education such as the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom many individual school systems are beginning to develop programs.

It is evident to all that an ill conceived and hastily developed program in the schools would not only not be of benefit to young people but might also endanger the acceptability of the major and priority program with adults. Some educators have been so concerned about the negative potential of such a program that they have been reluctant to embark on such a program. However, to take this stance does not mean that the problem will go away or that young people will forget that they have legitimate concerns. As noted above, not to take action is in fact to take action in a negative way. Not to take action means that young people will be seeking for information and interpretation from other sources.

In Turkey, teachers have received a general letter from the Ministry of Education indicating why the government has embarked on the population planning program and have received further documents from the Ministry of Health to help them to understand the national program. Up to this point, however, the Ministry of Education has not revised the curriculum of the school system. As noted earlier, such revisions require careful study.

Before any curriculum revisions can be implemented with success, the teachers need to understand the reasons for the changes and to have the training to institute

such changes. For this reason, both pre-service and in-service education of the teachers is a first step. As noted above, some effort has been made at the in-service education of teachers but it would seem important at this stage that the pre-service educational programs of teachers should be given high priority in Turkey as is in other countries.

The details of the curriculum for the training of teachers and perhaps for the school system is a matter to be worked out by the educators in each country. Basic values concerning family life, religious beliefs, and relationships between men and women as they are found in a particular country and as they are expressed in the education system would of course serve as a framework within which such curriculum changes would be developed. This is in essence a pedagogical problem which can be tackled as other such problems are by educational specialists in the country concerned. Pilot projects may need to be developed to test out various approaches to the problem.

The adult educator's stake in this problem is a very real one. If the formal education system ignores this area of instruction, the adult educator has to begin at the beginning. If the formal education system has laid a good foundation, then the adult education task is a more manageable one. The task of the adult educator is at best a difficult one since he has to work with those who have dropped out of school at an early level and to provide those types of educational experiences for those who have attained higher levels of education which are appropriate for adults and not for school students.

Since the area of population planning is basically a problem for adults, it would seem logical that the adult educators in a particular country such as Turkey would be wise to take the initiative in working out with their colleagues in other sectors of the Ministry of Education the appropriate division of labor between them and the teachers in the formal education system. This might take a different form for the academic schools and the vocational schools, for urban

schools where the drop-out rate may be relatively low as against the rural schools where relatively few students may reach the Orta or Lycee level.

In any event, it is clear that the problem of education in this area is of sufficient importance to warrant considered action in which not only the adult education sections but also other sections of the Ministry of Education need to work out a plan for action which will contribute to the attainment of the national goals in this field of endeavor as well as in many others.

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